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Letter dated 10 August 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached communication dated 28 July 2010, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, transmitting the quarterly report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 February to 30 April 2010 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

10-49039 (E) 300810

Please recycle

Annex

Letter dated 28 July 2010 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1510 (2003), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force covering the period from February to April 2010. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Anders Fogh **Rasmussen**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, pursuant to the obligation under Security Council resolution 1890 (2009) to report to the United Nations on the progress of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), covers the period from 1 February to 30 April 2010. As at 1 May 2010, total ISAF strength stood at 117,240 personnel from 28 NATO countries and 17 non-NATO countries. This represents an increase of over 29,500 people and two new countries during this quarter.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF has continued to assist the Government of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 February to 30 April 2010, ISAF suffered 1,130 casualties, including 106 killed in action, 1,016 wounded in action, and 8 non-battle-related deaths. Some highlights of the reporting period include:

(a) As a result of Government of Afghanistan and ISAF operations in Helmand Province the population is now expecting local Afghan Government and security forces to provide better governance and security, and to deliver basic services. Clearly the commitment of the Government to these ends will be a key factor in improving the situation in this part of Afghanistan. The Government has already developed a district delivery programme for central Helmand.

(b) Force levels of the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police have both shown positive gains towards their interim goals, owing to lower attrition rates and above-average retention and recruiting. New policies are in the planning stages to help maintain these trends. ISAF continues to fully support this process as a high priority.

(c) ISAF, in partnership with the international community, will continue to encourage the Government to further develop its capacity in delivering good governance. As the Government progresses the plan to deploy as many as 40 district delivery programme packages in key districts, there will be an increasing and continuous need for support from the international community.

Security situation

3. The insurgents in Afghanistan remain a resilient force, adapting their activities to changes in the approach of ISAF and the Afghan National Security Force improving governance, construction and development, reintegration and reconciliation efforts, and the upcoming election process. The number of incidents is rising, and improvised explosive device strikes and complex attacks in urban areas, remain the preferred method of operations. Following the arrests of important insurgent personalities, the leadership appears able to quickly appoint capable substitutes to fill the gaps. The insurgents still avoid direct confrontations with ISAF forces and the National Security Force and continue to intimidate the local population. Although insurgents were unable to prevent the large-scale operation in Helmand, including their displacement in Marjeh, they will seek to counter ongoing and upcoming operations in Kandahar. However, atmospherics in central Helmand

indicate that the local population is anxious for change but unwilling to wait very long for it.

4. The threat remains decentralized, with several insurgent groups dominated by the Taliban, but with a similar set of goals: withdrawal of international forces, removal of the Government and the establishment of a fundamentalist theocratic regime. Regionally, the security situation is as follows:

(a) *Regional Command Capital.* The insurgent activity level for the first quarter of 2010 was lower than the same period in 2009. Since the beginning of February, the insurgents were able to conduct only one complex attack in the Regional Command (26 February). Meanwhile, the Afghan National Security Force has shown an increased capability by apprehending 91 insurgents (compared to 6 in 2009) and by doubling the amount of weapon cache discoveries, to more than 30. The overall threat level is expected to remain high in the coming months, the associated potential for improvised explosive device attacks remaining significant.

(b) *Regional Command North.* The Kunduz area remains the main hotspot in the region, where violence linked to criminal activity, drugs and corruption presents the most important security concern. Despite the insurgents leadership's desire to increase pressure in the north so as to draw attention away from the southern and eastern regions, it is thought likely that local initiatives in combination with the Afghan National Security Force and additional international troops will contain the insurgents in this area.

(c) *Regional Command West.* Although the number of attacks in this Regional Command has not risen significantly during the reporting period, some reports indicate that several insurgent groups have found shelter here. Owing to a lesser presence of the Afghan National Security Force and ISAF relative to other areas, it is possible that the insurgents will be able to regroup, reconstitute and prepare for future operations in neighbouring districts or provinces.

(d) *Regional Command South.* Regional Command South remained the main centre of Taliban operations with a focus on Helmand and Kandahar Provinces. The increase in combined Afghan National Security Force/ISAF operations and presence continues to threaten the insurgents. In some areas, the high threat level continues to hamper reconstruction and development projects. Recent reports indicate a resolve by the insurgents to counter any offensive in Kandahar, as evidenced by the recent assassinations of Government officials, increased intimidation of local populations, and indications of additional fighters positioning themselves in and around the city.

(e) *Regional Command East.* Safe havens in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan remain a concern for the security situation. The insurgency has capitalized on ISAF movements, using footage of insurgents taking possession of manned forward operating bases in Kunar Province previously manned by ISAF for their propaganda efforts. It is thought that, although the forcible removal of insurgent leadership and fighters may have disrupted their plans to conduct attacks, this will serve only as a temporary setback.

5. Improvised explosive device attacks remain the main cause of casualties among ISAF, the Afghan National Security Force and Afghan civilians. A total of 1,129 detonations occurred during the reporting period, while 1,447 devices were discovered and disposed of, representing 56 per cent of all improvised explosive device events.

Afghan National Army

6. The Afghan National Army is the most robust and capable organization in the Afghan National Security Force. Successes over the quarter include weapon cache finds in and around Kabul and operations during operation Moshtarak in Helmand. Manning is currently on target for growth to the 134,000 goal by October 2010. Low attrition and a better than average retention rate this quarter may indicate that the December pay raise and improving conditions for fielded units are achieving the desired results. The Army leadership and the NATO Training Mission Afghanistan are studying these results for any lessons learned. It is anticipated that a newly approved Kandak rotation policy will also have a positive impact on personnel retention by allowing members who have been in combat to rotate out to more stable regions.

7. Headquarters ISAF has directed expanded partnering between ISAF and Afghan units at all levels, which has had a positive impact on the progression of the Afghan National Army Corps and Brigade in 2010. In keeping with this, the ISAF Joint Command Development Plan for the Afghan National Security Force, in conjunction with added forces available to partner and mentor with Afghan National Army units, will provide greater ISAF/Afghan National Security Force co-location and will have a positive impact on Army unit development and progress.

Afghan National Police

8. The growth of the Afghan National Police is currently ahead of the stated goals, although sustaining the recent retention and recruiting gains while reducing attrition is critical to maintaining this position. Attrition throughout the police force adversely affects the reform, progression and development of the Afghan National Police. A holistic evaluation of the support package, reviewing pay and operational tempo management, is expected to improve the attrition rates; there should be evidence of this within the next few months.

9. Recruiting successes continue to place significant demand on the institutional training establishment. Expansion in this arena is necessary to meet the stated growth goals. An example of recent increased capacity is the German Police Training Centre opened in Kunduz during early April, immediately providing 100 additional training places. Further growth of 250 training places is available as a contingency plan.

10. The Afghan Ministry of the Interior has approved the National Police Strategy and National Police Plan, the implementation of which presents the Afghan National Police with clear direction for growth and development for the first time. The National Police Strategy directs the growth and direction of the force with a five-year outlook, while the National Police Plan has a nearer term, single-year horizon.

11. In order to contribute to fighting corruption, which has dramatic adverse effects on public perception and ISAF operations, ISAF, in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior, has released ISAF anti-corruption guidance dated 10 February 2010. This regulation concentrates on corruption that (a) directly affects the population; (b) diverts resources that provide revenue to the Government; (c) misuses the Commander's Emergency Relief Programme, contingency or other development funds; (d) endangers soldiers and missions; or (e) hampers reintegration efforts.

The guidance also delineates the actions partners should take in combating and preventing corruption.

Afghan National Army Air Corps

12. The Afghan National Army Air Corps has continued its positive development and is now able to assist the Afghan people in several capacities. The new C-27 air transports are performing well. The first operational missions in the air transport role have been completed, signalling another capability that the Afghans are able to perform without the assistance of the Combined Air Power Transition Force. This particular capability will increase in the years to come as more C-27s, along with newly trained Afghan aircrew, arrive at their squadrons. The helicopter force also continues to expand, performing increasingly complex roles both on and off the battlefield. During this quarter, the helicopter force proved its value to the people of Afghanistan by rescuing those in need of help during floods near Kandahar.

Counter-narcotics

13. Operation Moshtarak in Regional Command South saw significant, close cooperation between ISAF, the Afghan National Security Force and law enforcement agencies to attack those targets at the "nexus" between narcotics and the insurgents. However, seizures of narcotics and paraphernalia have not been significant, since traffickers moved out of the region before the operation commenced. Buyers and transporters have demonstrated that they are unwilling to absorb sustained risk and the narcotics business has significantly decreased in the corresponding operational areas.

14. ISAF established the Combined Joint Interagency Task Force-Nexus to support and coordinate counter-narcotics operations and provide support to ISAF regional commanders. With Task Force-Nexus support, ISAF, the Afghan National Security Force, specialized units of the Afghan counter-narcotics police, and the United States Drug Enforcement Agency are working together to dismantle narcotics trafficking networks. ISAF has continued to support various law enforcement agencies with a mandate to counter the illicit narcotics industry in Afghanistan. Through liaison and coordination, ISAF has simplified the mechanisms that allow law enforcement agencies to gain ISAF support for their missions.

15. While counter-narcotics efforts in Afghanistan continue, long-term success depends on access to licit jobs, markets, sustainability of programmes and economic infrastructure supported by good governance and the rule of law.

Governance

16. Although the Government of Afghanistan grows more capable each day, it is still heavily dependent on support from the international community. In line with the decisions taken at the London Conference to attack corruption, ISAF is developing a six-month anti-corruption action plan to assist the Government in its efforts to remove corrupt figures that most affect the population. ISAF is partnering with other agencies of the international community to develop a set of key benchmarks to support Government reform of its civil service business practices.

17. Although progress exists with the deployment of the first packages in central Helmand under the Government-led district delivery programme, the programme

will have a lengthy implementation process and an absolute requirement for long-term sustained support. This deployment confirmed the need for more robust civil-military relationships. As the Government proceeds with the plan to deploy more than 40 district delivery programme packages in key districts, there will be an increasing need for support from the international community. This huge undertaking will require considerable assistance in terms of expertise and funding, as well as improved alignment of the diverse contributors and better synchronization with the security aspects in order to ensure success.

Civilian casualties

18. Avoiding civilian casualties to the maximum extent possible is critically important, as is the need to effectively manage the consequences of such incidents when they do occur. Reporting this quarter indicates that the insurgents are responsible for causing more than 70 per cent of all civilian combat-related deaths and an even higher percentage of overall civilian casualties. However, the insurgents can still exploit and manipulate civilian casualty events to their advantage, since ISAF is often perceived accountable for all incidents where casualties occur. Compliance with the ISAF Commander's tactical directive, tactical driving guidance, escalation of force directive, and night raids tactical directive is having a positive impact. By contrast, the Taliban "code of conduct" designed to avoid civilian casualties appears to have had little impact. There have been instances when the insurgents used civilians as human shields in an attempt to exploit ISAF caution. ISAF remains committed to safeguarding non-combatants, reducing all loss of life and property damage and avoiding civilian casualties at all costs.